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## CHAPTER III

### ON THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA

In 1660 all the colonial powers of Europe held the west coast of Africa in great esteem, not only because it produced gold, but also because it was regarded as a necessary adjunct to the colonies in the West Indies for the supply of Negro slaves. During their long war with Spain and Portugal the Dutch acquired a large portion of the West African coast, including the main fortress of St. George d'Elmina. This fact led them to regard themselves as having succeeded to the exclusive claims of the Portuguese on the Guinea coast.<sup>1</sup> With this end in view the Dutch agreed in the treaty of August 6, 1661, to return Brazil to the Portuguese as compensation for the forts and settlements which they had seized on the coast of Guinea.<sup>2</sup> Although the Dutch played the most prominent part in depriving the Portuguese of the trade to Guinea, the English, French, Swedes, Danes, and Courlanders, all obtained a minor commerce to Africa which they very jealously guarded. In a country so remote from the laws and civilization of Europe personal quarrels often arose among the subjects of these different nations, who were inclined to obtain what they could by fair means or foul. They magnified these petty quarrels<sup>3</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> John II of Portugal had assumed the title of Lord of Guinea in 1485.

<sup>2</sup> Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 2, p. 367.

<sup>3</sup> As for instance, in 1659, the seizure of a Dutch ship called the *Vrede* by a French captain under the pretense of a Swedish commission. Lias, *West Indien*, 1658 tot 1665, Zeeland chamber to the Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. (West India Company), March 1, 1660 (N. S.). Also, in the same year, the Dutch confiscated a Courland ship called the *Pietas* for trespassing on Dutch territory. *Ibid.*, Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. to S. G. (States General), June 23, 1661 (N. S.). Louis XIV also complained about the disturbance of French commerce on the Gambia by the Dutch. *Lettres, Mémoires et Négociations de Monsieur le Comte d'Estrades*, I, 185, Louis XIV to d'Estrades, August 13, 1661 (N. S.).

such an extent that they continually led to international complication.

The European trade in Africa was confined mainly to the regions of the Gold Coast and the Gambia River. Near the mouth of the Gambia River the subjects of the duke of Courland had bought an island from the natives in 1651. On this island they built a small fort, called St. André, from which they traded to several factories up the river.<sup>4</sup> Besides the Courlanders, the French and the Dutch carried on a very precarious trade on the river. In the early part of 1659, as a result of the war in the northern part of Europe, the duke of Courland became a prisoner of the king of Sweden. Under these circumstances the Amsterdam chamber of the Dutch West India Company<sup>5</sup> induced the Duke's commissioner, Henry Momber, to enter into a contract turning over to it all the duke's possessions in the Gambia River. The Dutch were to maintain the factories and to enjoy the trade until the duke was able to resume possession. The contract was of very doubtful value, since Momber himself admitted that he had no power to make it, but notwithstanding this fact he undertook to carry out its terms.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after the Dutch took possession of the island belonging to the duke of Courland it was surprised and plundered by a French pirate who, in return for a consideration, handed it over to a Gröningen merchant of the Dutch West India Company. The Gröningen chamber of this company was not anxious to retain the island and therefore signified to Momber its willingness to return it to Courland. Momber, who feared to have caused the displeasure

<sup>4</sup> Diederichs, pp. 20, 21. (Diederichs, H., *Herzog Jacobs von Kurland Kolonien an der Westküste von Afrika*.)

<sup>5</sup> The West India Company was subdivided into the chambers of Amsterdam, Gröningen, Zeeland, North Holland and Friesland, and the Maas. The Amsterdam chamber was much the most important; it was known therefore as the "presidiale" chamber.

<sup>6</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 191, February 4, 1659 (N. S.). At the same time Momber advised Steele, the Courland commander at Fort St. André, to pay no attention to the contract if he was in a position to defend himself, but Steele was unable to resist. Diederichs, pp. 45, 46.

of the duke by his contract, was glad to regain the island in June, 1660. Notwithstanding this fact, several ships belonging to the Amsterdam chamber of the West India Company entered the Gambia River and took possession of the island, keeping the Courlanders prisoners for a month. The natives, however, interfered in behalf of the Courlanders and the Dutch were finally compelled to retire to Cape Verde, leaving Otto Steele, the duke's commander, in possession.<sup>7</sup>

It was during this state of affairs on the African coast that the Company of Royal Adventurers was organized in England. It received its charter December 18, 1660. In the same month, Captain Robert Holmes sailed from England in command of the five royal ships which composed the first expedition. In March, 1661, he arrived at Cape Verde where he at once informed the Dutch commander that he had orders from Charles II to warn all persons of whatsoever nation that the right of trade and navigation from Cape Verde to the Cape of Good Hope belonged exclusively to the king of England. Holmes ordered the Dutch to vacate their forts and to abandon the coast within six or seven months.<sup>8</sup> Thereupon he seized the island of Boa Vista, one of the Cape Verde group claimed by the Dutch since 1621. Later he sent a frigate into the mouth of the Gambia. Otto Steele, the Courland commander of Fort St. André, unable to discern whether friend or foe was approaching, fired upon the frigate. Holmes considered this an insult,<sup>9</sup> and two days later sent a note to Steele requiring him to surrender the island to the English within ten days. At first Steele refused to obey, maintaining that the fort was the rightful possession of the duke of Courland. Thereupon Holmes threatened to level

<sup>7</sup> Diederichs, pp. 46-8; C. O. 1: 16, ff. 193, 195-7.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution of S. G., July 28, 1661 (N. S.); Aitzema, X, 76. (Aitzema, Lieuwe van, *Historie of Verhael van Saken van Staet en Oorlogh*.)

<sup>9</sup> See the oath taken by Holmes' men dated March 7, 1660/1, enclosed in the letter of Nassau and others to the estates of H. and W. F. (Holland and West Friesland), January 17/27, 1662.

the fort to the ground. Steele realized that with so few men and supplies resistance was useless, and therefore he complied with Holmes' demands.<sup>10</sup> The English assumed possession of the island, but after a fire had destroyed nearly all the fort and its magazine,<sup>11</sup> they chose to abandon it, and to settle on two other islands which they named Charles Island and James Island respectively in honor of their royal patrons. In this way the English gained their first possessions in the Gambia River.

When Captain Holmes left England the Dutch ambassadors in London informed the States General that he had gone to the "reviere Guijana" where he would build a fort, establish a trade and search for gold mines. This announcement was immediately sent to the West India Company which had received the more authentic advice that the English ships were on the way to the Gambia River. The West India Company urged that the Dutch ambassadors in London be instructed to inquire more fully as to the purposes of the expedition, and to prevent if possible anything being done to the prejudice of the company.<sup>12</sup> The ambassadors learned that the English maintained that all nations had a right to trade on the Gambia River, and that other nations than the Dutch had forts there.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the West India Company maintained that it had traded on the Gambia River ever since its formation and that, since the contract with the duke of Courland, it had been in complete possession of the river.<sup>14</sup> After receiving this statement the States General requested their ambassadors in London to see that the company's forts and lodges in the Gambia

<sup>10</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 193, relation of Otto Steele; Diederichs, p. 49. Holmes afterward admitted that there were but two men and a boy in the fort when it was taken. C. O. 1: 30, f. 74, Holmes to Sir Edward Walker, May 20, 1673.

<sup>11</sup> VanGogh and others to S. G., September 6/16, 1661.

<sup>12</sup> Lias, West Indien, 1658 tot 1665, Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. to S. G., January 10, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>13</sup> Resolution of S. G., January 13, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>14</sup> Lias, West Indien, 1658 tot 1665, Amsterdam chamber of W. I. C. to S. G., January 31, 1661 (N. S.).

River were not disturbed.<sup>15</sup> When the news of Holmes' exploit and his reported warning to the Dutch commander to evacuate the entire African coast reached the United Netherlands, the West India Company at once lodged a complaint with the States General.<sup>16</sup> At their suggestion the Dutch ambassadors obtained an audience with Charles II, who assured them that neither he nor his officers had given any order for the injury which had been done to the subjects of the United Netherlands, much less to possess any of their forts. The king also assured them that, if Holmes had committed any unjust action, he and his officers should be exemplarily punished.<sup>17</sup> Sir George Downing, the English envoy extraordinary at The Hague, further declared that Holmes had very strict instructions not to disturb the subjects of the United Netherlands or those of any other nation, and that, if anything to the contrary had been done, it was without the least authority.<sup>18</sup> Finally on August 14, 1661, Charles II declared to the States General that their friendship was very dear to him and that he would under no circumstances violate the "Droit de Gens."<sup>19</sup> With all this extravagant profession of good will no definite assurance was given the Dutch that the islands of St. André and Boa Vista would be restored to them. On August 16, Downing wrote to the earl of Clarendon that the island of St. André did not belong to the Dutch at all, but to the duke of Courland, and that an answer to this effect could be returned to the Dutch ambassadors if they objected to Holmes' actions. Furthermore, Downing intimated that the duke could probably be induced to resign his claims to the English.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Resolution of S. G., February 5, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, July 28, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>17</sup> Clar. St. Paps. (Clarendon State Papers), 104, f. 211, the Dutch ambassadors to Ruysch, August 5, 1661 (N. S.).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 104, f. 217, Downing to S. G., August 8, 1661.

<sup>19</sup> Aitzema, X, 78, Charles II to S. G., August 14, 1661.

<sup>20</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 104: 237, Downing to Clarendon, August 19, 1661 (N. S.). In another letter Downing declared, "it would be very well to accept of the Duke his transferring his interest to his Matie, and for the Dutch

Meanwhile, Captain Holmes, who was responsible for this unpleasant international complication, had returned from Guinea. Since he suffered no punishment for his violent actions on the African coast except the loss of his salary,<sup>21</sup> the Dutch ambassadors in London reminded the king that on August 14, 1661, he had absolutely disclaimed the proceedings of Holmes.<sup>22</sup> They requested, therefore, that Holmes be called to account for his actions, that Fort St. André be restored, that reparation for damages be made, and that in the future the king's subjects observe the laws of nations more regularly.<sup>23</sup> Holmes was ordered before the Privy Council to answer to the charges of the ambassadors,<sup>24</sup> but no effort was made to force him to respond. The duke of York kept him busy with the fleet where he incurred some official displeasure, by failing to require a Swedish ship to strike colors to his Majesty's ships in English seas, and was therefore required to be detained until further order.<sup>25</sup> Having extricated himself from this trouble Holmes finally appeared before the Privy Council in January, 1662,<sup>26</sup> where he offered "many reasons" in justification of his actions in Guinea.<sup>27</sup> He easily satisfied the king and the members of the Privy Council, which is not surprising since many of these men had helped to organize and finance the expedition.

ambrs you will do well to be 6 or 8 moneths in examining the matter and then let them know his Maties mind." Egerton MSS., 2538, f. 12, Downing to Nicholas, January 27, 1661/2.

<sup>21</sup> He suffered this punishment only because he had taken to Guinea a number of extra men whose wages the king felt obliged to pay. Admiralty Papers, Navy Board, In-Letters, 5, James to the Navy Board, September 10, 1661.

<sup>22</sup> This seems to be a little too much to say of the king's letter.

<sup>23</sup> C. O. 1: 15, f. 168, VanGogh and others to S. G., October 19/29, 1661.

<sup>24</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 2: 417, October 25, 1661.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 459, November 27, 1661.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 510, 514, January 8, 10, 1662. He may also have been before the Council in December, as an order was made on December 21, 1661, rescinding the former order to stop his pay. Admiralty Papers, Navy Board, In-Letters, 6, James to the Navy Board, December 21, 1661.

<sup>27</sup> Nassau and Hoorn to the estates of H. and W. F., January 17/27, 1662.

By this time it had become apparent that Charles II did not intend to make immediate restitution of St. André to the Dutch. This was in accordance with Downing's advice "to be 6 or 8 months in examining the matter" before making a decision.<sup>28</sup> The longer the English retained possession of the island the less likely the Dutch were to regain it. Finally, the duke of Courland sent a representative, Adolph Wolfratt, to London to insist upon the restitution of his possessions. Originally the English had apparently supported the claims of the duke of Courland, but it developed that they were no more inclined to return St. André to the duke of Courland than to the Dutch. The matter dragged on until November 17, 1664, when a contract was made between Charles II and the duke whereby the latter surrendered all his rights on the Gambia River. In return he received certain trading privileges there and the island of Tobago in the West Indies.<sup>29</sup>

When one proceeds from the Cape Verde region to the Gold Coast one finds that Dutch influence was especially strong. From Elmina and other forts the Dutch commanded the largest portion of the trade along this coast. However, the Danes, Swedes and English had long maintained a commerce on the Gold Coast where they also had established a number of factories. In 1658, Hendrik Carloff, an adventurer carrying a Danish commission, attacked and made himself master of Cape Corse which had been in the possession of the Swedes since 1651. After entering into friendly relations with the Dutch at Elmina,<sup>30</sup> Carloff returned to Europe, leaving his lieutenant, Samuel Smits, in charge of the fort. Fearing that the Swedes and the English, who had entered into an alliance, might endeavor to regain Cape Corse, Carloff advised Smits to surrender the fort to Jasper van Heusden, director general of the West India Company on the Gold Coast. The instructions were

<sup>28</sup> Egerton MSS., 2538, f. 12, Downing to Nicholas, January 27, 1661/2.

<sup>29</sup> C. O. 1: 18, ff. 310, 311.

<sup>30</sup> *Papieren van Johan de Witt betreffende de Oost en West Indische compagnie*, Carloff to Valckenburg, February 15, 16, 1658 (N. S.).



unnecessary, as Smits had surrendered Cape Corse to the Dutch on April 15, 1659. In return for this fort Smits and one of his compatriots received 5,000 and 4,000 gulden respectively.<sup>31</sup>

At the time when Hendrik Carloff seized Cape Corse the English had there<sup>32</sup> a factory to which they traded from their main fort at Kormentine.<sup>33</sup> On May 1, 1659, very soon after the Dutch obtained possession of the place, the English factory with all its goods was burned by the natives, perhaps at the instigation of the Dutch. The Hollanders, however, were not without misfortunes of their own, for after disavowing Smits' contract, the Danes sent a new expedition to Guinea which seized a hill commanding Cape Corse, on which they built the fort of Fredericksburg. Furthermore, the Swedes who had been dispossessed of Cape Corse by the Danes with the assistance of natives, toward the end of 1660, drove the Dutch out of Cape Corse. Since the Swedes were insignificant in number the fort very shortly fell into the control of the vacillating Negro inhabitants.

As soon as the natives obtained possession of Cape Corse they permitted the English to rebuild their factory at that place. An agreement was also made by which, upon the payment of a certain sum of money, the fort was to be surrendered to the English.<sup>34</sup> Since the Dutch maintained that Cape Corse belonged exclusively to them by reason of their contract with the Danes, they determined to prevent the English from obtaining possession of it. Furthermore, in order to exclude other Europeans from trading to any part of the Gold Coast, the Dutch declared a blockade on the whole coast, in which Komenda and other villages as well

<sup>31</sup> Loketkas, Staten Generaal, Sweden, no. 38.

<sup>32</sup> *Remonstrantie, aen de Ho. Mo. Heeren de Staten Generael der Veerenighde Nederlanden*, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> Dammaert, *Journal*, September 19, 1652, May 18, 1653, December 7, 19, 1655, April 22, 1656 (N. S.).

<sup>34</sup> S. P., Holland, 178, f. 123, undated paper dealing with the English title to Cape Corse.

as Cape Corse were situated. To carry out this policy they kept several ships plying up and down the coast.

The Dutch then proceeded to capture the following English ships for endeavoring to trade on the Gold Coast: the "Blackboy," April, 1661; the "Daniel," May, 1661; the "Merchant's Delight,"<sup>35</sup> August, 1661; the "Charles," August, 1661; the "Paragon," October, 1661; the "Ethiopian," January, 1662. In addition to these injuries the Dutch forbade the English at Kormentine to trade with the factory at Cape Corse, which warning was no sooner given than the factory was mysteriously destroyed by fire a second time, May 22, 1661. The English bitterly complained that this misfortune was due to the instigation of the Dutch.<sup>36</sup>

In like manner the Dutch captured a Swedish ship and interfered with the trade of the Danes to their fort of Fredericksburg,<sup>37</sup> which action greatly incensed the Danish African Company. Since voluntary satisfaction for these injuries could not be expected, Simon de Petkum, the Danish resident in London, caused the arrest of a Dutch West India ship, the "Graf Enno," which was one of the main offenders in seizing Danish as well as English ships on the Guinea coast.<sup>38</sup> The case was brought before the Admiralty Court, and judgment of condemnation was rendered in favor of the Danes.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Afterwards retaken by the English in the West Indies, toward the last of 1663. Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal, Downing to S. G., February 3, 1663/4. O. S.

<sup>36</sup> Admiralty High Court, Libels, 114, no. 231.

<sup>37</sup> Aitzema, X, 277.

<sup>38</sup> Admiralty High Court, Libels, 115, no. 124; *ibid.*, Examinations, 74, deposition of Edward Paulstadge, March 7, 1662/3.

<sup>39</sup> Nassau and Hoorn to the estates of H. and W. F., January 24/February 3, 1662. In March, 1663, Bernard Sparke, owner of the Paragon which the Dutch had seized on the Gold Coast, arrested a West India Company ship at Ilfracombe. Sparke asked for the condemnation of the ship, but on account of a treaty entered into between the English and the Dutch in September, 1662, the Privy Council refused to detain the Dutch ship. Cunaeus to the estates of H. and W. F., March 27/April 6, 1663; P. C. R., Charles II, 3: 357, 380.

At The Hague, Sir George Downing now had a great opportunity to vent his remarkable store of epithets on the Dutch for their violent actions against English vessels in Guinea. He complained to the States General "that the people of this contry doe everywhere as oppertunity offers sett upon, rob and spoyle" the English subjects; and that these things were being done not only by the West India Company but even by ships of war belonging to the Dutch government. Downing threatened that the king would "give order for the seizing of a proportionable number and value of ships and merchandises belonging to this contrey and distribute them amongst them accordinge . . . to their respective losses, and will take care that noe ships bee seized but such as belong to those provinces, and to such townes in those provinces, to which the ships belonged that did commit these violences and robberies."<sup>40</sup> In this way Downing hoped to set the non-maritime towns and provinces of the Netherlands against those which were interested in commerce, and thus to secure a cessation of the seizures. Upon one occasion in the time of Cromwell he had used this method successfully. Downing declared too that, to obtain justice in the United Provinces, it was necessary for the Dutch to realize that his Majesty would have satisfaction for injuries done "if not by faire means, by force."<sup>41</sup>

The Dutch ignored Downing's demands, even though on June 6, 1662, he reminded them of their unjust actions on the Gold Coast.<sup>42</sup> In all probability they were trusting to obviate all difficulties in the commercial treaty then being negotiated at London. In August, a new complaint was made to the States General<sup>43</sup> concerning the seizure of the English ship, "Content," off the Cape Verde Islands.<sup>44</sup> Shortly thereafter, the States General declared with respect

<sup>40</sup> Egerton MSS., 2538, ff. 68, 69, Downing to S. G., May 3/13, 1662.

<sup>41</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 76, ff. 217, 218, Downing to Clarendon, May 9, 1662.

O. S.

<sup>42</sup> Egerton MSS., 2538, f. 73, Downing to S. G., June 6/16, 1662.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 106, Downing to S. G., August 6/16, 1662.

<sup>44</sup> Add. MSS. (Additional Manuscripts), 22,919, f. 270.

to the English ship, "Daniel," seized in 1661, that it was a gross misrepresentation for the owner to maintain that the master and crew of the ship were English. Furthermore, the Dutch advanced proof that the ship had been fitted out with a cargo in Amsterdam, and had afterwards attempted to pass as an English ship, in order to escape being seized as an interloper by the West India Company.<sup>45</sup>

Further consideration regarding these seizures was postponed indefinitely by the 15th article of the commercial treaty entered into between the United Provinces and England in September, 1662.<sup>46</sup> In accordance with its provisions the ships which the Dutch had seized on the African coast were included in the lists of damages which the English submitted against the United Provinces. Thereafter the ships formed no important part in the negotiations between the two nations.

Thus far the Company of Royal Adventurers which had sent out the expedition under Captain Robert Holmes had not been more active on the Gold Coast than numerous private traders of England. The seizure of ships by the Dutch had been a matter of much apprehension to all the traders on the coast, but from now on it mainly concerned the Royal Adventurers. The company was anxious to establish new forts and factories in Africa in order to build up a lucrative trade. Its agents therefore began to erect a lodge at Tacorary, a village not far from Cape Corse. The Dutch, although they had not succeeded in recovering Cape Corse from the natives, considered that the fort and the surrounding territory belonged to them. On May 24, 1662, they bade the English to desist from further invasion of their rights at Tacorary or any other place under Dutch obedience.<sup>47</sup> The English, however, disregarded the Dutch protest and notwithstanding their opposition the factory was completed.<sup>48</sup> In less than a month from this time the

<sup>45</sup> Resolution of S. G., August 28, 1662 (N. S.).

<sup>46</sup> Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 2, pp. 424, 425.

<sup>47</sup> Index op het Register en Accorden met de Naturellen, Wilree to Edmund Young, May 24, 1662 (N. S.).

<sup>48</sup> S. P., Holland, 176, f. 119.

natives drove the Dutch out of their factory in Comany.<sup>49</sup> Thereupon the Dutch determined to continue even more vigorously their policy of blockading the whole coast and, by cutting off the trade of the natives with the English, to force the Negroes into subjection and to recover Comany and the fort at Cape Corse.

In October, 1662, two ships of the Royal Adventurers, the "Charles" and the "James," were prevented from trading to Komenda by the "Golden Lyon" and two other Dutch men-of-war.<sup>50</sup> When asked as to the reason for this interruption of trade the Dutch general, Dirck Wilree, replied that he had caused the ports of Comany and Cape Corse to be blockaded until the natives rendered satisfaction for the injuries which they had committed against the Dutch.<sup>51</sup> When the two English ships continued their effort to trade at Cape Corse and other villages, the "Golden Lyon" followed them from place to place, and on one occasion seized a small skiff which was attempting to land some goods. Discouraged at the treatment accorded to them the English officers finally gave up the attempt to trade on the Gold Coast, and returned home with their ships, after delivering to the Dutch a solemn protest against the injuries which they had suffered.<sup>52</sup>

When Secretary Williamson informed Sir George Downing of the misfortunes of the two ships, "Charles" and "James," and asked him to interfere in behalf of the Royal Company at The Hague, Downing promised to do what he could, but since he was so well acquainted with the Dutch method of treating such complaints he did not anticipate favorable results. "God help them," he declared, "if they (the Royal Company) depend upon paper relief." With the duke of York at the head of the Company and the king

<sup>49</sup> Add. MSS., 22,919, f. 262.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 22,920, f. 24, affidavit of William Crawford and others, before the Admiralty High Court, February 13, 1663/4.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 22,919, f. 262, Wilree to the officers of the ship James, November 9, 1662 (N. S.).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 22,920, f. 24, affidavit of Crawford and others, February 13, 1663/4.

as well as many of his courtiers greatly concerned in its welfare, he considered that it would be well cared for. "Whatever injuries the Dutch do them," he exclaimed, "let them be sure to do the Dutch greater, & then let me alone to mediate between them, but without this all other wayes will signify not a rush."<sup>53</sup>

Downing demanded of the States General whether Dirck Wilree had been given any authority to blockade the entire coasts of Comany and to forbid all English trade with the natives.<sup>54</sup> In this way he hoped either to have the States General disavow Wilree's action or to raise the question whether the West India Company had a right to institute such a blockade. In letters to Clarendon and Bennet, Downing maintained that the Dutch were accustomed both in West Africa and in the East Indies, to declare war on the natives and to cut them off from all trade with foreigners until they agreed to sell their goods only to the Dutch. Downing declared that the English had already lost a great deal of trade on account of such impositions, and that if they were continued the East India and African companies would be ruined. "Pay them in their own kind & sett their subjects a crying as well as his Majties, & you will have a very faire correspondence, & they will take heed what they doe, and his Majtie shall be as much honored & loved here as he hath been dispised, for they love nor honor none but them that they thinck both can & dare bite them."<sup>54a</sup> After urging the king to take immediate action concerning their ships the members of the Royal Company requested Downing "to drive the States to the most positive reply." They declared that any answer would, at least, expedite matters, and "if those states will owne that Wilrey had their orders to warrant his action, wee will hope, it may begett some paralel resolution of state here. If they disclaim it, and

<sup>53</sup> S. P., Holland, 167, f. 251, Downing to Williamson, September 11, 1663. O. S.

<sup>54</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, ff. 13, 14, Downing to S. G., September 17/27, 1663.

<sup>54a</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 106, f. 192, Downing to Clarendon, September 18, 1663. O. S.; S. P., Holland, 167, ff. 271, 272, Downing to Bennet.

leave their West India Company to be responsible, they will send us to a towne where there is noe house, unlesse wee pay ourselves, per legem talionis.’<sup>55</sup>

In answer to Downing’s memorial concerning the “Charles” and the “James” the West India Company confined itself to a justification of Wilree’s actions, and omitted to say anything about the authority by which they had been committed.<sup>56</sup> Although Downing insisted that a definite answer be given him on this point, the States General also evaded the issue by maintaining that nothing had been done by the company but what justice and necessity required. They supported the company in its contention that Cape Corse and Comany were effectually blockaded, and therefore the ships “Charles” and “James” had no right to trade there.<sup>57</sup>

Such a justification of the West India Company’s actions could scarcely be satisfactory to Downing or to those in charge of foreign affairs in England. The Royal Company was very much concerned also lest the Dutch would continue to interrupt the ships which it sent to the Gold Coast. To add to this adverse condition news arrived that, about the first of June, 1663,<sup>58</sup> the Dutch had at last succeeded in regaining possession of Cape Corse. At this there was much satisfaction in Holland. Downing wrote that since the Dutch now had the two important castles of Elmina and Cape Corse, commanding the most important trade in all Guinea, they intended to prohibit all other nations from trading to that region.<sup>59</sup> Over this turn of events there was great disappointment among the members of the Royal Company, who had confidently expected to obtain Cape Corse from the natives. In fact, they had intended to

<sup>55</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, f. 22, Royal Company to Downing, September 25, 1663.

<sup>56</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 106, f. 223, Downing to Clarendon, October 2, 1663 O. S.

<sup>57</sup> S. P., Holland, 168, ff. 41, 42.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 176, f. 121.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 167, f. 284, Downing to Bennet, September 25, 1664 (O. S.).

make Cape Corse their main stronghold and at that place establish their principal trade.<sup>60</sup>

Charles II decided that it was time to come to the assistance of the Royal Company, and on September 5, 1663, he lent three of his ships to it for a voyage to Africa.<sup>61</sup> Later, he also ordered several additional royal vessels commanded by Sir Robert Holmes to accompany these ships. The preparation and departure of the fleet was short and remained a close secret with the officials immediately concerned.

The king instructed Holmes to protect the company's agents, ships, goods, and factories from all injury; and to secure a free trade with the natives. Also, he declared, "If (upon consultacon with such comandrs as are there present) you judge yorself strong enough to maintaine the right of his Matie's subjects by force, you are to do it, and to kill, sink, take, or destroy such as oppose you, & to send home such shippes as you shall so take." If the two ships "Golden Lyon" and "Christiana," the first of which was the chief assailant of the company's ships "Charles" and "James" in November, 1662, were encountered, Holmes was instructed to seize them. All other ships which had committed such injuries on the vessels of the Royal Company<sup>62</sup> were likewise to be seized and taken to England. On his arrival at the mouth of the Gambia River in January, 1664, Holmes discovered that since his visit in 1661 the relations of the Dutch and English had been anything but friendly. The English commander on Charles Island had given Petro Justobaque and other Dutch factors from Cape Verde permission to trade up and down the river. Holmes heard that they had endeavored to stir up the native king of Barra against the English in December, 1661.<sup>63</sup> On the 21st of

<sup>60</sup> Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris, Cunaeus to DeWitt, November 2, 1663 (N. S.).

<sup>61</sup> C. S. P., Col., 1661-1668, p. 159, warrant to duke of York, Sept. 5, 1663.

<sup>62</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, f. 53. These instructions are not preserved in their complete form.

<sup>63</sup> C. O. 1: 16, f. 157, oath of William Quick and others at Charles Island, June 1, 1662.



June, 1662, Justobaque with a ship again appeared on the Gambia. In order to compel him to recognize the English rights on the river, the English commander at James Island fired at the ship. The Dutch ship paid no heed to the demand of the English and returned the fire until it was a safe distance away. A few days later when returning to Cape Verde the English shot away the main mast of the Dutch ship, but Justobaque managed to escape.<sup>64</sup>

Although these incidents had happened more than a year and a half before Holmes' arrival at James Island, he was incensed at the actions of the Dutch. When it was reported to him that a large Dutch vessel had arrived at Cape Verde, he assumed that it was the "Golden Lyon" which had sailed from Holland about the same time as he had departed from England. Several English ships were expected on the Gambia and for fear of their capture by the "Golden Lyon," Holmes sailed at once for Cape Verde where, according to his statement, without any provocation he was fired upon by the Dutch. Holmes returned the fire, and after suffering some damage withdrew from the attack. On the following morning he was surprised, he declared, to see that the Dutch had hung out a white flag and were sending a boat to him offering to surrender the fort. He called a council which, after considering the former hazards of the English trade on the Gambia, decided "that the better to protect our trade for a tyme and sooner to bring in Hollander's West India Compa to adjust our nation's damages sustained by them, and to that end we accepted the surrender of that place."<sup>65</sup>

Holmes' explanation of the taking of Cape Verde, although simple and direct, is probably incomplete. His whole career shows him to have been a man who was likely

<sup>64</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 154, deposition of Stephen Ustick, June 7, 1664; S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, ff. 147, 148.

<sup>65</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, f. 148, Holmes' narrative. After taking the island Holmes sent for as many men as could be spared by the Royal Company's factors on the Gambia. Accordingly they took possession of it in the name of the company. C. O. 1: 18, f. 24.

to take the initiative, so that it is not surprising to learn from the depositions of various Dutchmen that, previous to the battle of Cape Verde, Holmes had seized two Dutch vessels, and that after receiving an unfavorable reply to his demand to surrender, Holmes attacked the fort at Cape Verde, which capitulated together with several Dutch vessels.<sup>66</sup>

From the conflicting statements made by the Dutch and the English it is difficult to ascertain the truth regarding the events immediately preceding the attack on Cape Verde, but the fact remains that Holmes had obtained a number of Dutch vessels and was master of one of their most important forts on the west coast of Africa. Since he had discovered the ease with which the Dutch possessions could be seized, Holmes next set out down the coast toward Elmina. On the way he despoiled the Dutch factory at Sestos, on the pretext that at that place the Dutch had stirred up the natives against the English.<sup>67</sup> Shortly afterwards, he encountered and captured the "Golden Lyon" which had added to its notorious career by preventing the "Mary," a ship belonging to the Royal Adventurers, from trading on the Gold Coast in March, 1663.<sup>68</sup> Finally he seized the Dutch factory at Anta, on the ground that it was commanded by the former captain of the "Christiana," one of the Dutch ships designated for seizure in the king's instructions.<sup>69</sup>

Before leaving the Gambia, Holmes had been apprised of what had taken place on the Gold Coast since the Dutch had captured Cape Corse in June, 1663. After the Dutch had taken possession of this fortress General Valckenburg despatched a very strong protest to the chief English factory at Kormentine, in which he maintained that the Dutch

<sup>66</sup> Aitzema, XI, 294, deposition of Andries C. Vertholen, June 9, 1664 (N. S.); Lias, West Indien, 1658 tot 1665, depositions, June 19 and July 19, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>67</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 90, resolution of the council of war on board the Jersey, April 9, 1664.

<sup>68</sup> Loketkas, Staten Generaal, Engeland, deposition of John Denn, commander of the ship Mary, December 3, 1663 (O. S.).

<sup>69</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, f. 149, Holmes' narrative.

had a right to the exclusive possession of the whole Gold Coast by reason of their conquest of the Portuguese. He required the English to leave the lodge which they had recently built at Tacorary and demanded that they refrain from all trade on the Gold Coast. He even had the temerity to claim that the English had injured the Dutch trade at Cape Corse and Tacorary to the extent of sixty marks of gold per month, and that the Dutch had lost one thousand marks on account of the interference of English ships such as the "Charles" and the "James."<sup>70</sup>

In answer to Valckenburg's sweeping assertions Francis Selwin, the English chief at Kormentine, and John Stoakes, commander of one of the English ships, replied that the English had more right to Cape Corse and other places on the Gold Coast than the Dutch, because they had first settled and fortified Cape Corse with the consent of the natives in 1649.<sup>71</sup> As a further indication that they were not intimidated by the hostile attitude of Valckenburg the English commenced to build another factory at Anashan in the Fantin region. In September, 1663, this brought forth another vigorous protest from Valckenburg, who declared that he would not tolerate the continuance of this factory.<sup>72</sup> By way of enforcing these threats the Dutch prevented the "Sampson," another ship belonging to the Royal Adventurers, from engaging in any trade at the factory of Komenda.<sup>73</sup> Thereupon Stoakes declared that, although the English greatly desired to live in peace with the Dutch, they would not under any circumstances abandon their factory at Anashan.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> S. P., Holland, 176, ff. 118-123, June 7, 1663 (N. S.). A mark of gold was supposed to be worth about £28. 16s.

<sup>71</sup> Index op het Register der Contracten, letters dated June 13, 14, 1663. 1663.

<sup>72</sup> S. P., Holland, 167, ff. 258-260, September 12, 1663. This protest with that of Valckenburg of June 7, 1663, was sent to England, where both were regarded as very important.

<sup>73</sup> C. O. 1: 17, ff. 153, 154, Mr. Brett to the Royal Company, August 31, 1663; Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal, Downing to S. G., September 15, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>74</sup> Index op het Register der Contracten, September 17, 1663.

At this time the English had factories and settlements at Kormentine, Komenda, Tacorary, Anto, Anashan, Ardra, and Wiamba. The forts and lodges of the two companies were all located within a few miles of one another and for either company to increase the number of its settlements only made the instances of friction between them more numerous.<sup>75</sup> It seemed that whichever company was able to overcome the other would be sure to do so. It was under these circumstances that Sir Robert Holmes made his appearance on the Gold Coast. The fact that the Dutch had laid claim to the whole Gold Coast was sufficient excuse for his interference, although, if we may believe the Dutch version, Holmes exceeded their claims by reasserting the English right to the whole of the west coast of Africa, as he had done at Cape Verde in 1661.<sup>76</sup>

Be this as it may, according to Holmes' account, Captain Cubitt of the Royal Company endeavored to induce Valckenburg to come to an amicable adjustment of the troubles on the Gold Coast. Holmes expected that his previous seizures would induce such a settlement, but Valckenburg obstinately refused Holmes' demand to evacuate Cape Corse.<sup>77</sup> Since he had failed to intimidate the Dutch, Holmes sailed to Cape Corse where he visited the Danish fort of Fredericksburg. The Dutch fired at him from Cape Corse, an act which Holmes regarded as the beginning of war.<sup>78</sup> He called a council of officers and factors of the

<sup>75</sup> C. O. 1: 17, ff. 153, 154, contains a number of extracts of letters from factors of the Royal Company to the company dated from June to September, 1663. They mention many other conflicts with the Dutch, including the charge that the Dutch had hired the natives to attack the fort at Kormentine.

<sup>76</sup> Aitzema, XI, 295, deposition of Andries C. Vertholen, June 9, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>77</sup> C. O. 1: 18, f. 39, order of the council of war held on board the Jersey, May 7, 1664.

<sup>78</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, ff. 51, 52, Holmes' examination. In his examination before the Privy Council Holmes asserted that in one of the ships captured from the Dutch, orders had been found from the States General commanding the Dutch factors to seize the English fort at Kormentine. There is no evidence to support this assertion and the States General afterwards characterized the statement as "an errand invention & a fowle lye." S. P., Holland, 181, f. 10.

Royal Company on May 7, 1664, where, after considering "theire (the Dutch) unjust possessing of that very castle of Cape Coast indubitably ours, . . . wee then resolved att that counsell . . . for the better securitye of that trade, our interest in that countrye, and to regaine our nacion's rights, to reduce that castle of Cape Coast wch accordingly succeeded."<sup>79</sup> On pretexts of much the same character Holmes seized the Dutch factories of Agga and Anamabo, together with several ships. By this time the Dutch were stripped of all their settlements on the African coast except the main fortress of Elmina. In finishing his account of the expedition Holmes blandly remarked, "I hope I have nott exceeded my instructions, they being to concerve our comerce."

Since it is not essential to follow Holmes across the Atlantic to New Amsterdam one may return to the negotiations which were proceeding in Europe subsequent to his departure from England. So closely had the secret of Holmes' expedition to Africa been guarded that it is even doubtful if Sir George Downing at The Hague was aware of it.<sup>80</sup> As far as the purpose of the voyage was concerned nothing could have been nearer the advice which he had been urging for months. Moreover, Downing was not alone in his opinion that negotiation regarding affairs in Africa would be fruitless. The Danish resident at The Hague, Carisius, who was pressing the Danish claims for the possession of Cape Corse, confessed to Downing that nothing could be obtained from the Dutch unless it was "attended with some thing that was reall & did bite."<sup>81</sup> Since this was the case Downing pointed out that the Danish fort at Fredericksburg would probably fall into the hands of the Dutch. To avoid this misfortune he advised the Royal Company

<sup>79</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 114, ff. 150, 151, Holmes' account; C. O. 1: 18, f. 39, order of the council of war held on board the Jersey, May 7, 1664.

<sup>80</sup> S. P., Holland, 174, f. 32, Downing to Bennet, January 10, 1664/5 (O. S.). This letter, written over a year later, shows that Downing was not acquainted with Holmes' instructions.

<sup>81</sup> Lister, Thomas Henry, *Life and Administration of Edward, first Earl of Clarendon*, III, 259, Downing to Clarendon, November 6, 1663 (O. S.).

to induce the Danes to transfer Fredericksburg to it, granting them in return a free commerce at that place. As the Royal Company did not see fit to follow this suggestion<sup>82</sup> Downing began to form other plans. In order that Carisius might continue to worry the Dutch with his claims Downing submitted a memorial to the States General protesting against the Dutch treatment of the Danes in Guinea.<sup>83</sup> Indeed he was so friendly toward the Danish pretensions that the king of Denmark sent him a special letter thanking him for his services.<sup>84</sup>

In the main, however, Downing was persistently urging the Dutch to make a settlement of the cases of the Royal Company's two ships, the "Charles" and the "James," and of the right of the Dutch to blockade the Gold Coast on the pretext of war with the natives. In December, 1663, at the instigation of the West India Company, the States General maintained that only a few ships were necessary to blockade the small native states on the Gold Coast, since in each case there were but one or two outlets to the sea.<sup>85</sup> On February 1, 1664, Downing obtained a conference with DeWitt and the representatives of the States General and the West India Company. The company's representatives boldly admitted that they had hindered the English ships from trading at Komenda and Cape Corse, because the natives had burned their factory at the former place and had seized their fortress at Cape Corse. This irritating assumption of their ownership of Cape Corse aroused Downing. So far, he had contented himself in supporting the Danish and even the Swedish claims to Cape Corse. Now, notwithstanding the inconsistency of his position, he remarked that, if it was a question of the ownership of Cape Corse, the English could show more rights to the place than any

<sup>82</sup> S. P., Holland, 168, f. 230, Downing to Bennet, December 18, 1663.

<sup>83</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 107, f. 101, Downing to S. G., February 8, 1663/4 (O. S.).

<sup>84</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, f. 26, Schested to Downing, February 10, 1664; S. P., Denmark, 17, f. 150, Frederick III to Schested, December 15, 1663.

<sup>85</sup> Loketkas, Staten Generaal, Engeland, W. I. C. to S. G., read December 1, 1663 (N. S.); *ibid.*, S. G. to Downing, December, 1663.

one, since they had been the first to settle it and to trade there; and that even if the Dutch were in possession of it, the English still had a right to trade to the Danish fort of Fredericksburg which was located in the same harbor.<sup>86</sup>

When the discussion turned on the requirements of an effective blockade the Dutch advocate stoutly maintained that "it is nott for any other to prescribe how and in what manner the company shall proceed to retake their places, that if they think that the riding with a few shipps before a place and that att certaine times onely whereby to hinder other nations from trading with it, be a sufficient meanes for the retaking thereof, they have no reason to be att further charge or trouble." He further declared that a certain sickness in that region, known as "Serenes," caused by the falling dew, made it impossible for Europeans to engage in a blockade by land, and therefore "in this case itt was to be counted sufficient and to be called a besieging, though the place were onely blocked up by sea."<sup>87</sup> Downing scoffed at this as an unheard of theory and asked what would happen if the Royal Company instituted blockades of this character and pretended "Serenes" whenever it seemed convenient. With such a display of feeling it is no wonder little could be done toward adjusting the difficulties. DeWitt suggested a new treaty for the regulation of such affairs both in Europe and abroad. Downing flatly refused to consider such a proposition if it was meant thereby to dispose of the cases of the "Charles" and the "James." He remained firm in his demand for reparation for these two ships.<sup>88</sup> A few days after this conference Downing learned of the misfortunes which had befallen the Royal Company's ship, the "Mary," during the previous year. On February 16, he apprised the States General of this additional cause for complaint and de-

<sup>86</sup> S. P., Holland, 169, ff. 120, 121, Downing to (Bennet), February 12, 1663/4 (O. S.).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 121.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 122, 124.

manded satisfaction as in the case of the other two vessels.<sup>89</sup>

If Downing was becoming exasperated, the people in England were scarcely less so when they heard of the troubles of the "Mary" and other similar occurrences. Secretary Cunaeus declared that the animosity in England towards Holland was growing exceedingly among the common people. Led by the duke of York, governor of the Royal Company, the courtiers had also become exceedingly indignant at the treatment accorded the company's ships and factories in Africa.<sup>90</sup> One of Valckenburg's statements regarding the Dutch ownership of the Gold Coast had been circulated on the Royal Exchange, where it became the chief topic of conversation. Indeed so great was the sensation it stirred up that Samuel Pepys declared on April 7, 1664, that everybody was expecting a war.<sup>91</sup> On the 21st of April the members of the House of Commons resolved that the damages inflicted by the Dutch in India, Africa, and elsewhere constituted a very great obstruction to English trade. They, therefore, petitioned the king for redress for these various injuries, and promised to support any action he took with their lives and fortunes.

At last the Dutch realized that the African situation was becoming serious, and Downing therefore found it somewhat easier to bring them to a discussion of the subject. DeWitt proposed that the case of the three Royal Company's ships as well as that of two East India ships, the "Bona Esperanza" and the "Henry Bonaventure," should be included in the list of damages provided for by the treaty of September, 1662. Downing absolutely refused to consider such a makeshift on the ground that the ships of the Royal Company had been injured after the treaty had been signed, and therefore in accordance with its pro-

<sup>89</sup> S. P. Holland, 169, f. 132, Downing to S. G., February 16, 1663/4 (O. S.).

<sup>90</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, Cunaeus to DeWitt, March 11/21, 1664.

<sup>91</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 103; *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, Cunaeus to DeWitt, (April 8/18, 1664, N. S.).



visions these losses should be submitted to the Netherlands for compensation.<sup>92</sup>

Since he had failed to induce Downing to permit the three ships to be included in the list of damages, DeWitt had exhausted the last means of delay. On May 6, 1664, Downing announced in letters to Bennet and Clarendon that DeWitt had at last consented to accommodate the matter of the three ships. He was willing, moreover, to enter into an agreement, for the prevention of all such future troubles, along the lines which Downing had laid down. Regarding the two East India ships, however, whose case was quite different from those of the Royal Company, DeWitt would not alter his stubborn refusal of compensation. Downing was intent on gaining a complete victory and at once rejoined that no new commercial regulations could be considered until entire satisfaction had been rendered for the damages which the Dutch had committed.<sup>93</sup>

Although an attempt was made to suppress the first tidings of Holmes' actions on the Gambia, the rumor of them soon spread. It was not long until it was well known in London and Amsterdam that he had taken Cape Verde and captured several Dutch vessels.<sup>94</sup> The West India Company bitterly accused the English of having covered their designs in Africa with a cloak of complaints regarding the Royal Company's ships. The company reminded the States General that this was the same Holmes who, in 1661, had set up a claim to the whole coast and who was to have been exemplarily punished on his return by the king of England. Since it was evident that all the Dutch factories and forts in Guinea were in danger of capture from Holmes, the company asked the States General for some

<sup>92</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 107, f. 147, Downing to Clarendon, April 1, 1664 (O. S.); Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 2, p. 424, article XIV.

<sup>93</sup> S. P., Holland, 170, ff. 16-18, Downing to Bennet, May 6, 1664 (O. S.); Clar. St. Paps., 107, ff. 195, 196, Downing to Clarendon, May 6, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>94</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, Cunaeus to DeWitt, May 6/16, 1664; *Secretekas, Engeland*, no. 123, Cunaeus to the directors of W. I. C., May 6/16, 1664.

vessels of war which should be sent to the African coast for the protection of its property.<sup>95</sup>

It was now the turn of the Dutch to seek compensation and restitution of their property. Since Downing was a very exasperating man with whom to deal they were undoubtedly pleased when toward the end of May, 1664, he suddenly returned to England.<sup>96</sup> The Dutch, therefore, decided to send VanGogh to London, with the hope that he could obtain more satisfactory results there than had ever been possible with Downing at The Hague. VanGogh was instructed to seek for the restitution of the West India Company's property; to remind the king of the unfulfilled promises which he had made regarding Holmes and the voyage of 1661;<sup>97</sup> and to seek for new commercial regulations which would prevent future trouble on the African coast.<sup>98</sup>

Very soon after his arrival in England VanGogh gained an audience with the king who, in reply to his demands, answered that as yet his knowledge of the Holmes' affair was very imperfect; that he had not given Holmes orders to seize Cape Verde; and that in case he had exceeded his instructions he would be punished upon his return, according to the exigency of the case.<sup>99</sup> Such a reply sounded too much like the king's former promise of August 14, 1661, to satisfy DeWitt. He instructed VanGogh to insist that his Majesty make these promises in writing.<sup>100</sup> VanGogh answered DeWitt that it was hopeless to think of inducing the English to return Cape Verde, in view of the preparations then in progress for carrying on trade to the west coast of Africa. He declared that already they were boast-

<sup>95</sup> *Secretekas*, Engeland, no. 123, W. I. C. to S. G., May 23, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>96</sup> S. P., Holland, 173, f. 129, Downing to Bennet, December 30, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>97</sup> Resolution of S. G., June 13, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, June 5, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>99</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, f. 174, VanGogh to S. G., June 24/July 4, 1664.

<sup>100</sup> DeWitt, *Brieven* (DeWitt, Johan, *Brieven, geschreven ende gewisselt tusschen den Heer Johan de Witt*), IV, 311, DeWitt to VanGogh, July 11, 1664 (N. S.).

ing in London that a contract was to be made with the Spanish for the delivery of 4,000 slaves per annum.<sup>101</sup> As early as the middle of June the Royal Company had eight ships loading in London with goods worth 50,000 pounds destined for the Guinea coast.<sup>102</sup>

In midsummer, 1664, Andries C. Vertholen and other Dutchmen, whom Holmes had carried from Cape Verde to the Gold Coast, returned to Holland, where they reported at length Holmes' actions at Cape Verde and on the way to the Gold Coast.<sup>103</sup> These details did not tend to DeWitt's peace of mind. Hence it is no wonder, upon Downing's return to Holland, that the two men "fell very hard upon the busines of Cabo Verde" in their very first conversation. As he had instructed VanGogh to do, so DeWitt demanded of Downing that the English king make a written promise that no more hostilities would be committed on the Guinea Coast, or the Dutch would be in duty bound to assist their company. Downing, who now felt the advantage which the success of Holmes' expedition gave him, replied to DeWitt as follows: "I must say," that the West India Company has "ever since his Majtye's return played the devills & pirats, worse thn Argiers, taken 20 English ships, hindered others, putt out a declaration whereby they claymed al the coast to thmselves; & was it lawfull for thm so to demean thmselves & only lawfull for the English to suffer, tht yet his Majty did not intermeddle, but only the one company against the other, & no wonder if at last the English did stirr a little; & tht Holms was the companye's servt & tht should his Majty have given or lent thm an old ship or two, yet he had nothing to doe in the ordering their designe." Furthermore, he declared that if

<sup>101</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, VanGogh to DeWitt, July 15/25, 1664.

<sup>102</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 4: 122; S. P., Dom., Charles II, 99, f. 170, petition of the Royal Company for a convoy for its ships. It was also reported that the duke of York was fitting out a frigate at his own expense to send to Guinea. C. S. P., Dom., 1663-1664, p. 264, newsletter, September 2, 1663.

<sup>103</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, f. 238, W. I. C. to S. G., July 21, 1664 (N. S.).

the Dutch took it upon themselves to assist the West India Company "his Majty would find himself equally obliged to assist his company."<sup>104</sup>

To every one it now seemed as if an open conflict must come. Toward the last of July, Pepys declared that all the talk was of a Dutch war,<sup>105</sup> although even Coventry, a director of the Royal Company, admitted that there was little real cause for it and that the damage done to the company, which had brought on Holmes' expedition, did not exceed the paltry sum of two or three hundred pounds.<sup>106</sup> In Holland, also, the disposition toward war was increased by the realization that the next report from Holmes might bring news of the total loss of the Gold Coast, including the main fortress of Elmina. Under these circumstances the king's promise to punish Holmes according to the exigency of the case meant little or nothing. The maritime provinces, especially Holland, were determined to assist the West India Company against English aggression in Africa.

When Downing discussed the situation with DeWitt, however, he was surprised to hear him still express the possibility of giving satisfaction for the seizure of the Royal Company's ships, and not "so hott" for sending a fleet immediately to Guinea as he had been at first.<sup>107</sup> Even Downing was for the time being deceived. His spy, who was well within DeWitt's immediate circle, for once was not on duty to give his usual faithful report to his benefactor. DeWitt was accustomed to resort to the same trickery and deceitful diplomacy that was so characteristic of Downing. Indeed it would be difficult to decide which of these two men was the greater master of this questionable art. The English had sent Holmes to Africa totally unknown to the Dutch and had taken half the coast

<sup>104</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, ff. 39-41, Downing to Clarendon, July 22, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>105</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 202.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 42, 143.

<sup>107</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, ff. 48, 49, Downing to Clarendon, July 29, 1664 (O. S.).

from them before they were even aware of the expedition. It is little wonder then that the idea occurred to DeWitt to retaliate in kind on the English and to keep his plans a profound secret.

In 1661 the Dutch had sent a fleet under Admiral DeRuyter to the Mediterranean Sea in conjunction with an English squadron commanded by Sir John Lawson, for the purpose of punishing the Algerian and other pirates who had been infesting Dutch and English commerce. DeRuyter and Lawson had succeeded in making a number of favorable treaties with the pirates, though the task of quelling them was by no means complete. DeWitt realized that a fleet could scarcely be dispatched to Guinea from Holland without being discovered. Therefore, he together with six of his councillors decided to send secret orders to DeRuyter to sail at once for the coast of Guinea. On account of a peculiarity of the Dutch government, however, it was impossible to dispatch these orders without first securing a resolution of the States General. DeWitt was well aware that somehow these resolutions of the States General usually became known to Downing and the English. He therefore determined that, while the States General should pass the order, he would arrange the matter so that no one would know of it, except those who were already in the plan. On August 11, 1664, the secretary of the States General read the resolution very quickly, during which time DeWitt and his six cohorts raised so much disturbance by loud conversation that no one in the room heard what was being read.<sup>108</sup> The trick succeeded admirably. DeWitt was now in possession of the necessary authority, and orders were dispatched at once to DeRuyter to leave his post in the Mediterranean and to sail for the west coast of Africa without revealing his destination to Lawson, the English commander. He was instructed to recover for the West India Company those places which Holmes had seized and to deliver to Valckenburg, the Dutch general on the Gold

<sup>108</sup> Brandt, Gerard, *La Vie de Michel de Ruiter*, pp. 212-213.

Coast, all the effects of the English which were not necessary for the different factories of the company.<sup>109</sup>

In order not to arouse Downing's suspicions by apparent apathy, the Dutch began to prepare several ships ostensibly for Africa. For the purpose of misleading Downing still further the Dutch agreed to accept an offer made by the French for mediation of the difficulties. DeWitt still insisted, however, that a written promise be given him that the forts and factories which Holmes had seized on the African coast would be restored to the West India Company.<sup>110</sup> Later, in the same month of August, 1664, Downing submitted to the States General the draft of a proposed agreement for the settling of future disputes in the East Indies and in Africa.<sup>111</sup> Downing was of the opinion that, although the Dutch could never be depended on to keep such an agreement, it would be a good thing in the East Indies because "ye (the English) are the weaker ther." In Africa the situation appeared different to Downing, for there the English had the advantage. "I hope in the meantime," he declared, "while we are (negotiating) Holmes will doe the work ther," because there "never will be such a opportunity as this to make clear work in Affrica."<sup>112</sup> A few days later he advised that everything on the African coast should be done "so as (the) king of England may not appeare in it, but only (the) Rll Company, & they takeing occasion from our affront."<sup>113</sup> Still later he asserted that even in Holland everyone believed that since the king and the Royal Company had gone so far, they would seize the entire African coast so that the whole affair might be worth while.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Brandt, *Vie de Ruiter*, pp. 213, 214, 217.

<sup>110</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, ff. 23, 24, Downing to Bennet, August 4, 1664 (O. S.); *ibid.*, ff. 124, 125, Downing to Bennet, August 26, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>111</sup> S. P., Holland, 171, ff. 119, 120, Downing to S. G., August 25, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 25, Downing to Bennet, August 4, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 56, Downing to Bennet, August 12, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>114</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, ff. 75, 76, Downing to Clarendon, August 26, 1664 (O. S.).

Although DeWitt had been successful in sending the secret orders to DeRuyter concerning his voyage to Guinea, he could not long hope to deceive the ever-watchful Downing. Indeed with all due respect to his crafty rival one is almost surprised that Downing's suspicions were not aroused for more than a month after the commands were despatched. When the possibility of DeRuyter's having been ordered to Africa dawned on Downing, he at once demanded of DeWitt where DeRuyter was going when he left Cadiz. Without hesitation DeWitt replied that he had returned to Algiers and Tunis to ransom some Dutch people.<sup>115</sup> The bald falsehood disarmed Downing's suspicions and, although he advised that Sir John Lawson keep a watchful eye on DeRuyter, he assured Bennet that the report that the latter had gone to Guinea was without foundation.<sup>116</sup> The report continued to be whispered about,<sup>117</sup> however, and although two weeks later DeWitt repeated his falsehood, Downing began to fear that he was being deceived. He declared that although he was certain that the States General had given no orders in the usual way for DeRuyter's departure to Guinea, he was very well aware that the Dutch could find means to do those things which they deemed necessary. The more he considered the matter, the likelihood of secret orders having been given to DeRuyter seemed to him more and more probable. "I am sure if I were in their case, I would do it," he finally declared, and therefore he again advised Bennet to have Sir John Lawson watch DeRuyter closely.<sup>118</sup>

The news of Holmes' success at Cape Verde had stirred up extraordinary activity in the Royal Company. In September, 1664, the company was busily enlisting factors and

<sup>115</sup> Lister, *Life of Clarendon*, III, 344, Downing to Clarendon, September 9, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>116</sup> S. P., Holland, 172, f. 171, Downing to Bennet, September 9, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>117</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, f. 82, Downing to Clarendon, September 16, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>118</sup> S. P., Holland, 172, f. 241, Downing to Bennet, September 23, 1664 (O. S.).

soldiers for the Guinea coast. A number of ships, several of which belonged to the king, and some of which the company hired, were being prepared for the voyage to Guinea.<sup>119</sup> To add to the company's bright prospects, a vessel from the Gold Coast arrived in England at the end of September,<sup>120</sup> bringing the account of Holmes' capture of Cape Corse and other factories on the African coast. The Royal Company now saw itself master of West Africa. Pepys declared that the news from Holmes would certainly make the Dutch quite "mad."<sup>121</sup> It did indeed create a very great impression in Holland, where many had believed that Cape Corse was impregnable. Downing, of course, rejoiced exceedingly. Oftentimes in the past he had supported the Danish and Swedish claims to Cape Corse, but now he found no difficulty in showing Carisius and Applebome, the Danish and Swedish representatives at The Hague, that their claims were as before, against the Dutch. Omitting to say anything of the English claim to Cape Corse Downing explained to them that since the Dutch had been in possession of Cape Corse, Holmes had seized it together with other places on account of the numerous injuries done to the Royal Company. "They both replied that they took it so."<sup>122</sup>

In London, VanGogh lost no time in obtaining an interview with Charles II concerning Holmes' latest activities. Again the king asserted that Holmes' violent actions on the African coast were without his knowledge, especially the affair at Cape Verde, which place he declared was of no importance and not worth one hundred pounds.<sup>123</sup> Regarding

<sup>119</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal*, VanGogh to S. G., September 23/October 3, 1664.

<sup>120</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 254; *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal*, VanGogh to S. G., September 30/October 10, 1664.

<sup>121</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 254.

<sup>122</sup> S. P., Holland, 172, f. 35, Downing to Bennet, October 7, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>123</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 3/13, 1664. A few days after this VanGogh very much annoyed the king by bringing up the Cape Verde incident again. The king burst out, "And pray, what is Cape Verde? A stinking place



his responsibility for the capture of Cape Corse he refrained from committing himself so definitely, but he assured the Dutch ambassador that Cape Corse belonged to the English; that their claim to it would be satisfactorily established; and that he intended to preserve these new acquisitions by sending Prince Rupert with a fleet to the coast of Africa.<sup>124</sup> On the 28th of October, after learning of Holmes' capture of New Amsterdam, Charles II boldly threw aside his reserve and declared that the taking of Cape Corse, as well as of New Amsterdam, "was done with his knowledge & by his order as being a business wch properly belonged to the English, that the ground was theirs & that they had also built upon the same, that the same was afterwards taken from the English by the Netherlands West India Compa, & . . . that the English will justify & demonstrate their right to all this."<sup>125</sup> If Holmes' actions in Guinea have so far seemed very extraordinary, they can hardly be so regarded any longer in view of the light which the king himself threw over the whole situation in this remarkable statement. To be sure he had not as yet assumed responsibility for the capture of Cape Verde. However, his direct responsibility for the other actions of Holmes, which were much more important, makes it a matter of little consequence whether the capture of Cape Verde is to be attributed to him or not.

It may have seemed to Downing that there was less excuse for the seizure of Cape Verde than for the other places. At any rate he held out some hope to DeWitt that it would be restored to the Dutch. This must have been a bitter sop to DeWitt, who was well aware that as for Cape

(using these very words): Is this of such importance to make so much adoe about? As much as I could ever yet learne of it, it is of noe use at all." S. P., Holland, 172, f. 158, VanGogh to Ruysch, October 24, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>124</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten van H. en W. F.*, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 3/13, 1664.

<sup>125</sup> S. P., Holland, 173, f. 178, VanGogh to Ruysch, November 7, 1664 (N. S.); DeWitt, *Brieven*, IV, 387, 390, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 28/November 7, October 31/November 10, 1664.

Corse he need entertain no such hope.<sup>126</sup> There was one feature of the situation, however, which somewhat pleased DeWitt.<sup>127</sup> Downing could no longer maintain that the troubles in Guinea were merely quarrels between two commercial companies in which the king had no direct interest or connection. DeWitt would not therefore be at a loss to find numerous reasons why DeRuyter had been sent to Africa when the time came for defending that action.

By this time every one in London and Amsterdam was in a state of extreme suspense as to whether or not DeRuyter was on the Guinea coast. On the 14th of October, 1664, news was received both in Holland and in England from Cadiz to the effect that DeRuyter intended to sail to Guinea upon his departure from that port.<sup>128</sup> In Amsterdam, encouraged by this vigorous rumor, the stocks of the West India Company began to rise from the low point where they had been for some time.<sup>129</sup> When Downing chided DeWitt about DeRuyter, the latter replied in a bantering fashion that if he believed the report, notwithstanding what had been said to the contrary, to continue in the belief; it could do no harm.<sup>130</sup> In London, the apprehension of DeRuyter's expedition greatly checked the enthusiasm of the Royal Company, and caused the king to postpone Prince Rupert's departure to the African coast. VanGogh reported the cry that was heard everywhere in London, "Guinea is lost. What now is it possible to do with the Dutch."<sup>131</sup> The Dutch ambassador, who did not

<sup>126</sup> DeWitt, *Brieven*, IV, 390, DeWitt to VanGogh, November 14, 1664 (N. S.).

<sup>127</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, f. 126, Downing to Clarendon, November 11, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 100, Downing to Clarendon, October 14, 1664 (O. S.); *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan de Staten Generaal*, October 14/24, 1664.

<sup>129</sup> Clar. St. Paps., 108, f. 108, Downing to Clarendon, October 28, 1664 (O. S.); *ibid.*, f. 120, Downing to Clarendon, November 4, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 117, Downing to Clarendon, November 4, 1664 (O. S.).

<sup>131</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris*, VanGogh to DeWitt, October 17/27, 1664.

cease to haunt the king's chambers over Holmes' seizures, found Charles II irritable and greatly displeased with affairs. When questioned as to whether he would punish Holmes, the king declared that Holmes did not need to fear punishment at home since the Dutch had evidently sent forces to do it themselves.<sup>132</sup>

The news concerning DeRuyter's successful expedition to the African coast, which arrived in England just before Christmas, 1664, showed, as Pepys expressed it, that the English had been "beaten to dirt at Guinea."<sup>133</sup> Indeed DeRuyter's conquest of the coast in the end was as complete as that of Holmes.<sup>134</sup> With one exception DeRuyter captured all the English factories and forts, including Kormentine, which he delivered with their goods to the agents of the West India Company. The English retained only Cape Corse, which, because of its strong position and the loyalty of the natives, DeRuyter decided would offer a successful resistance.<sup>135</sup>

Up to the time that DeRuyter departed for the African coast it is conceivable that by mutual concessions the troublesome questions existing between England and the United Provinces might have been amicably settled. The Dutch, however, had decided that this could not be done with honor and advantage to themselves, and therefore they chose to answer the warlike actions of Holmes in kind. When the English learned of DeRuyter's activities on the African coast the growing animosity between the two countries was so greatly intensified that war was inevitable. The members of the Royal Company who realized the grav-

<sup>132</sup> S. P., Holland, 173, f. 19, VanGogh to Ruysch, December 5, 1664 (N. S.). The duke of York was known to be very favorable to Holmes at the same time. S. P., Dom., Charles II, 105, f. 176, Coventry to Bennet, November 27, 1664.

<sup>133</sup> Pepys, *Diary*, IV, 312.

<sup>134</sup> He arrived at Cape Verde October 22, 1664, and left the Gold Coast February 27, 1665.

<sup>135</sup> In this account it seems unnecessary to give the details of the capture of these places. They may be found at length in Brandt, *Vie de Ruiter*, pp. 223 to 265.

ity of the situation begged the king to come to the company's assistance.<sup>136</sup> The king, who considered the company to be of great importance to the colonial trade, and who realized his own intimate connection with its formation, declared on January 2, 1665, that he was resolved "to assist, protect & preserve the said company in the prosecution of their said trade,"<sup>137</sup> a declaration which was tantamount to war.

The Anglo-Dutch war of 1665-7 was, therefore, as has long been known, a war over trade privileges. Furthermore, in the popular mind, it was the dispute over trading privileges on the West African coast which "became the Occasion, at least the Popular Pretence of the war with Holland."<sup>138</sup> In international disputes some facts, although of minor importance, are often seized upon with great vigor by the contending parties. It is very probable that both England and the United Provinces greatly overestimated the value of the African forts and factories, but, at that time, the possession of them seemed very important. To many of these places plausible claims were advanced by both the English and the Dutch. There was plenty of opportunity therefore for disputes, and the representatives of the two great commercial companies did not fail to utilize it.

If the factors of the two companies in Guinea found it impossible to reconcile their differences, the same observation may be made concerning Downing and DeWitt at The Hague. One is not inclined to excuse the deceit of the latter nor to sympathize with the apathetic neglect with which he met all English claims. On the other hand, Downing was perhaps the match for DeWitt in cunning and his master in argument. His contempt for the Dutch made it impossible for him to deal with them without gaining a complete victory. Compromise is the basis of most diplomacy, but

<sup>136</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 110, f. 19; Condition of Co., Jan. 2 (1664/5).

<sup>137</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 4.

<sup>138</sup> *The Case of the Royal African Company of England and their Creditors*, p. 6.

such a word was scarcely in Downing's vocabulary. There were men in England who realized that Downing was slowly but surely leading the two countries into war. Clarendon reproved him for overzealousness; and Lord Hollis, the English ambassador in France, informed him that he saw no "causam belli, onely litigandi," and asked him if he could not temper his speech "by pouring in oyle & not vinegar," and thus prevent a war if possible.<sup>139</sup> In Downing's behalf it may be said, however, that his attitude was the same as that of the mercantile interests in England which he so well represented. The increasing importance of the mercantile element, both in England and Holland, and their desire to encroach on the trade of one another in all parts of the world, especially in Guinea, was responsible for the war.<sup>140</sup> When the war was inevitable, representatives of the English commercial interests assured the government of their loyal support and assistance.<sup>141</sup> As for the Dutch they, too, entered the conflict with high hopes for they did not fear Charles II as they had feared Cromwell.

Sir Robert Holmes who had been so largely responsible for the difficulties which resulted in the Anglo-Dutch war arrived in England early in January, 1665. He was ordered to surrender the ships which he had taken from the Dutch in Guinea to the Royal Company.<sup>142</sup> On the 9th of January, by way of appeasing VanGogh, he was thrown into the Tower of London,<sup>143</sup> where he was to remain, the king declared, until he gave a satisfactory account of his actions at Cape Verde. Once more it appeared as if proceedings were to be taken against him "according to the

<sup>139</sup> Add. MSS., 22,920, f. 46, Lord Hollis to (Downing), September 2/12, 1664.

<sup>140</sup> On October 30, 1664 (N. S.), d'Estrades declared to the king of France that the real cause of the war then about to begin was the desire of the king of England to become master of Guinea. *Mémoires d'Estrades*, II, 517.

<sup>141</sup> See the paper of Sir Richard Ford, one of the prominent members of the Royal Company. *Clar. St. Paps.*, 83, f. 374.

<sup>142</sup> C. S. P., Dom., 1664-5, p. 164, warrant to Holmes, January 7, 1664.

<sup>143</sup> S. P., Holland, 174, f. 138, VanGogh to Ruysch, January 9/19, 1665.

exigency of the case.”<sup>144</sup> It is interesting to note that his imprisonment resulted from the capture of the one place, mention of which was omitted in his instructions. However, Holmes was not long detained in confinement. Probably on account of the influence of the duke of York and of Prince Rupert he was again set at liberty toward the last of January,<sup>145</sup> and VanGogh reported that he was even enjoying royal favor.<sup>146</sup> Apparently Holmes was unable to render a satisfactory account of his prizes to the Royal Company, however, and he was therefore reconfined in the Tower about the 24th of February.<sup>147</sup> On the third of March he was examined before the Privy Council in regard to his expedition. His explanation of the various events was found satisfactory and he was forthwith ordered to be discharged from the Tower.<sup>148</sup> This order was not executed at once because he had not even yet rendered a satisfactory account to the Company.<sup>149</sup> Royal clemency was invoked and a warrant was issued March 23, 1665, releasing him from all criminal and pecuniary charges which might be brought against him.<sup>150</sup> The king’s intervention in his behalf brought to an end the connection of Sir Robert Holmes with the company’s affairs on the African coast.

By concluding the account of the diplomatic relations of England and the United Provinces with the early part of 1665, it is not intended to convey the idea that all diplomatic intercourse between the two countries ceased at that time. Downing remained in The Hague until August of that year, but neither side thought seriously of attempting to prevent the struggle in which they were already engaged on the

<sup>144</sup> S. P., Holland, 174, f. 138, VanGogh to Ruysch, January 13/23, 1665.

<sup>145</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris, VanGogh to Ruysch*, January 27/February 6, 1665.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, VonGogh to Ruysch, January 30/February 9, 1665.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, Cunaeus to —, February 24/March 6, 1665.

<sup>148</sup> P. C. R., Charles II, 5: 69.

<sup>149</sup> *Brieven van de Ambassadors in Engeland aan den Raadpensionaris, (VanGogh) to Ruysch*, February 27/March 9, 1665.

<sup>150</sup> C. S. P., Dom., 1664–5, p. 268, order to release Holmes, March 23, 1664/5.

African coast. DeRuyter arrived at Cape Verde on October 11, 1664, where he found nine English vessels most of which were in the service of the Royal Company and had only recently arrived on the Guinea coast. In response to an inquiry made by the English as to his intentions DeRuyter replied that he had come to punish the Royal Company for Holmes' hostile actions. He demanded the surrender of the company's factors and goods on shore and on the several ships. Since the English were unable to resist they surrendered the goods of the Royal Company after which the vessels were permitted to depart. In this way DeRuyter attempted to show plainly that he was not carrying on hostilities against the English nation, but was only aiding the West India Company to recover its property and goods, and to punish the Royal Company for the actions of Sir Robert Holmes.

DeRuyter left a Dutch garrison at Cape Verde and started with his plunder for Elmina. On the way he despoiled the English factory on the Sierra Leone River. On December 25 he arrived on the Gold Coast and made an attack on Tacorary where he was temporarily repulsed, but later he succeeded in blowing up this English factory. He then proceeded to unload at Elmina the effects which he had taken from the English. While doing so he received orders from the States General, dated October 21, 1664, commanding him to seize all English goods and vessels, whether they belonged to the Royal Company or not. In accordance with these instructions DeRuyter captured several English vessels, but he considered his chief duty to be the taking of the English fort at Kormentine. An agreement was made with the natives of the neighboring region of Fetu, who acted in conjunction with the Dutch ships and with the forces which DeRuyter landed. Although many of the natives remained loyal to the English, Kormentine fell an easy prey to the attacking party about the first of February, 1665. The other English factories, with the exception of Cape Corse, were also occupied without much

difficulty. Although DeRuyter had received special orders to reduce Cape Corse, he considered this impossible, on account of the ease with which it could be defended and the loyalty of the Negroes to the English cause in that territory. DeRuyter was therefore compelled to depart from the Gold Coast on his voyage to Barbadoes without having taken possession of Cape Corse.<sup>151</sup>

On April 18, 1667, Lord Hollis and Sir William Coventry, who were selected as the English envoys to treat for peace between England and the United Provinces, were instructed to propose that each country retain whatever places were in its possession on the 25th of the previous December. On the other hand, the English were also directed to induce the Dutch to give back Kormentine if possible.<sup>152</sup> How vigorously the envoys urged the return of Kormentine cannot be ascertained, but at any rate they were unsuccessful in obtaining it. When the treaty was concluded at Breda, July 21, 1667, it provided that each country should retain the territories which it held on the tenth of the previous May.<sup>153</sup> Thus ended the war which had in so large a

<sup>151</sup> The account of DeRuyter's voyage given here is a digest of what appears at much greater length in Brandt, *Vie de Ruiter*, pp. 223-265. A short contemporary English account may be found in C. O. 1: 19, ff. 88, 89.

<sup>152</sup> S. P., Holland, 182, ff. 246, 247. The Dutch had entertained some hopes of inducing the English to surrender Cape Corse, as is evident from negotiations which they carried on with the Swedes and the Danes. In March, 1665, a treaty was drawn up between Sweden and the United Provinces in which the former country agreed to renounce her claims of damage against the West India Company and all her rights to any places on the African coast, for which renunciation the States General was to pay 140,000 rix dollars. The treaty failed of approbation on account of the reluctance of the king of Sweden to withdraw his interests from the coast of Africa. Aitzema, XI, 1102, 1103; S. P., Holland, 174, f. 148, Downing to Bennet, February 17, 1664/5 (O. S.); S. P., Holland, 179, f. 86, Downing to Bennet, March 10, 1665 (March 10, 1664/5. O. S.).

With the Danes the Dutch had more success. On February 11, 1667, a treaty was entered into between Frederick III, of Denmark and the United Provinces, in which it was agreed that the Danes should surrender all their claims to Cape Corse, retaining, however, the adjacent fort of Fredericksburg. Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 3, p. 74.

<sup>153</sup> Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique*, VI, part 1, pp. 44, 45, article 3.



measure been caused by the troubles between the Royal Adventurers and the West India Company.

At the conclusion of peace between the two countries, the English cannot be said to have been in a better position on the Guinea coast than they were before the war. On the other hand, it would not be difficult to rebuild new factories at the places which they had lost during the war. Indeed at the time peace was made factories had already been settled in several places occupied before DeRuyter's expedition. Nicolas Villaut, a Frenchman who made a voyage down the coast of Guinea in the years 1666 and 1667 mentioned an English factory on one of the islands in the Sierra Leone River, another at Madra Bomba just north of Cape Mount, and still another just below Cape Miserado.<sup>154</sup> He also mentioned the strength of the English fortress at Cape Corse, and declared that, although there was war in Europe between England and Denmark, the English factors at Cape Corse and those of the Danes at the neighboring fort of Fredericksburg made an amicable agreement to commit no acts of hostility against one another; and that this agreement was so punctually observed that the soldiers of the two nations mingled freely at all times.<sup>155</sup> Villaut failed to describe the condition of the company's fort in the Gambia River, but on October 30, 1667, an attack on it by the natives was reported to the general court of the company.<sup>156</sup> The Negroes succeeded in obtaining possession of the island but were presently dislodged by the company's factors after the loss of a number of white men.<sup>157</sup>

Inasmuch as there remain very scanty records of the company's trading activities and the manner of government instituted at its forts and factories on the African coast, it

<sup>154</sup> Villaut, *A Relation of the Coasts of Africa called Guinee*, pp. 49, 56, 75.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 131, 135. Villaut also speaks of an English fort at Eniacham (Anashan).

<sup>156</sup> A. C. R., 75: 60.

<sup>157</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 217, f. 76, John Lysle to Williamson, September 16, 1667.

is impossible to describe fully these aspects of the company's history. When the company first sent agents to the head factory at Kormentine seven men each served a month's turn as chief factor. As might have been expected trouble resulted concerning the succession.<sup>158</sup> The company therefore withdrew this order and directed that one of the factors be given charge of affairs with the title of chief agent and with a salary of one hundred pounds per year.<sup>159</sup> After the Dutch captured Kormentine in 1665, Cape Corse became the chief English factory, under the direction of Gilbert Beavis, who was replaced by Thomas Pearson in 1667. At the end of the Anglo-Dutch war the company's affairs on the African coast were at a low ebb, and the uncertainties of the Guinea trade were at once demonstrated when the former agent, Beavis, in conjunction with the natives, assaulted Cape Corse, carrying off Pearson and much of the company's goods. With the assistance of one of the Royal Company's ships the factors recovered the fort and replaced Pearson in charge of affairs, where he remained to the year 1671.<sup>160</sup>

In addition to these difficulties there was also a repetition of the petty quarrels between the agents of the Royal Company and those of the West India Company, which had so characterized the years previous to the war. When the English began to build lodges at Komenda and Agga, the Dutch general, Dirck Wilree, at once objected, claiming that the possession of the adjacent fort of Kormentine gave them exclusive rights to those places.<sup>161</sup> The English denied this claim<sup>162</sup> and sent home for more supplies to fortify Komenda. At the same time they advised the company that the licensed private traders who had appeared on the coast had very greatly injured the trade of the company's

<sup>158</sup> C. O. 1: 17, f. 243, John Allen to (the Royal Adventurers), December 18, 1663.

<sup>159</sup> A. C. R., 75: 3.

<sup>160</sup> S. P., Dom., Charles II, 380, f. 57; *ibid.*, 381, ff. 138, 139.

<sup>161</sup> C. O. 1: 23, ff. 3, 4, 6, 7, Wilree to Pearson, January 23/February 2, and February 14/24, 1668.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, f. 5, Pearson to Wilree, n. d.

factories, because they sold their goods very much cheaper than the company's agents could afford to.<sup>163</sup> The renewal of the trouble between the two companies moved the general court on June 30, 1668, to ask for the king's assistance.<sup>164</sup> The information lately received from the company's agents was read in the Privy Council and referred to the committee for trade.<sup>165</sup> This committee recommended the appointment of some persons to treat with the Dutch regarding the possession of the disputed places, and Secretary Morice was therefore instructed to sound the Dutch ambassadors in London about the matter. Instructions of a similar nature were to be given to Sir William Temple, who was about to depart for the United Netherlands as the English ambassador.<sup>166</sup> At this point the matter seems to have been dropped without further discussion, and Komenda remained a subject of possible contention between the English and the Dutch for many years to come.

During the latter years of the history of the Company of Royal Adventurers the factories including Cape Corse fell into great decay, on account of the failure of the company to send out ships and supplies. Nearly all the English trade was carried on in the vessels of private traders, who in return for their licenses, agreed to take one-tenth of their cargoes free of all freight charges, which goods were to be used for the maintenance of the company's factories, especially Cape Corse.<sup>167</sup> Even this provision was not sufficient, and in the latter part of November, 1670, it was found necessary to send some additional supplies for the immediate relief of Cape Corse.<sup>168</sup> The king, who was

<sup>163</sup> C. O. 1: 23, f. 2, Pearson and others to the Royal Adventurers, February 18, 1667/8.

<sup>164</sup> A. C. R., 75: 75.

<sup>165</sup> C. O. 1: 23, f. 1, petition of the Royal Adventurers (July 3), 1668; P. C. R., Charles II, 7: 374, July 3, 1668.

<sup>166</sup> P. C. R., 7: 378, July 8, 1668. The minutes of the general court for November 14, 1668, mention a letter intended to be dispatched to Sir William Temple. A. C. R., 75: 81.

<sup>167</sup> A. C. R., 100: 47, 48.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 96.

still indebted to the company for his subscription to the stock, was induced to pay a part of it, with which money two ships were despatched for the relief of Cape Corse<sup>169</sup> which had been in great distress.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>169</sup> C. O. 1: 25, f. 227, estimate of charges for supplies at Cape Corse, December 19, 1670; A. C. R., 75: 106, 107.

<sup>170</sup> Foreign Entry Book, 176, minutes of the foreign committee, January 22, 1671/2.